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ABSTRACT

It is proposed that as both bilingual education (BE) and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs continue to define their specific philosophies more clearly, the definitions are beginning to overlap in significant ways. In differing degrees, they are beginning to understand and appreciate the complexity of dual language learning and teaching. First and second whole language theory and research are moving in the direction of integrating the two. BE and ESL's main point of intersection is in the student whose linguistic circumstances have required him to develop both English and another language, who may be in the majority in the near future. Both BE and ESL instruction aim at bilingual/bicultural development of language minority and language majority students. Areas for further consideration and research include the dual-language acquisition process, special cross-cultural or dual-cultural identity development, and implications of these issues for classroom instruction. (MSE)

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SOME CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ESL PROGRAMS

Luisa Durán

Abstract

A question often asked by both the Bilingual Education (BE) and the English As A Second Language (ESL) teachers is: What are the differences and what are the similarities or connections between ESL and Bilingual Education programs? This paper attempts to clarify the strong relationship which exists between these two seemingly different dual language programs. A review of the literature yielded very little by way of purposely relating these two types of programs. Also, because it is impossible to discuss the differences between any particular ESL and any particular BE program, this paper aims at a very general conceptual analysis only of some differences and similarities between the two. While their early beginnings are markedly different, their later development show them converging in very important ways.

"Some people erroneously assume that there is a distinct difference between second language instruction and bilingual instruction. Second language instruction, however, is an integrated part of any dual language model" (Lessow-Hurley, 1990).

Early Difference and Later Convergence

Bilingual Education Programs have been seen as a more radical educational reform movement than English as a second language programs, and have therefore had a more turbulent history than programs in ESL. The early histories of these two programs differ because originally they aimed at very different goals: ESL aimed at acculturation mainly toward the dominant English speaking culture, while BE aimed at biculturation through the preservation of the non-dominant, non-English speaking culture as well as the acquisition of English as a second language and culture.

From perhaps the early 1900's to the middle sixties ESL education philosophy may have essentially meant EOL, English as the ONLY language. In contrast, Bilingual Education has always intended English to be one of two languages in use in the U.S.: as a second language for language minority learners and as the first language (of two) for language majority learners.

While BE has always considered English as the other language, ESL has only recently (within the last 10 years) recognized the non-English or first language as an important factor and goal of this dual language development event. While there are many very sensitive ESL teachers, there are still places where very little to none of the first language is used whether or not it supports culture maintenance, self-esteem and the learning of English.

The early and later histories of both these programs have been intertwined strongly since both language education approaches are used with non-English/limited-English proficient students (LEPs) or used with language-

minority students from within the states and with non-English foreign students at all levels of formal education.

BE earlier and ESL later began to appreciate the positive, negative and neutral transfer and development effects or the two-way/mutual cross-linguistic influences of the two languages on each other, including the code-mixed variety. The early and later histories of both these language programs are intertwined in terms of the early and later theories of language acquisition/development and therefore instruction. Both began with basically isolated linguistic skills methods of several kinds and both have since moved toward more authentic communicative, natural, wholistic, participatory and interactive developmental language approaches (Richard-Amato, 1988).

Both BE and ESL, at different times and to different degrees have tried the early language instruction methodologies: grammar translation method, direct method, and the audio-lingual method. Both, originally stressed oral proficiency while today all the language arts are seen as synchronously and simultaneously important to each other's development (Blair, 1982).

While all children might ideally be included in BE programs the ESL's target population remains the non or limited-English student. Only recently have ESL educators seen themselves as leaders of two-way bilingual programs for majority and minority language speakers. Bilingual acquisition has been fraught with the issues of political power more than with the issue of its epistemological power.

Underlying Commonality of Definition

The meaning of bi in bilingual education and the meaning of second in English as a second language make the two programs essentially the same, since bi means two and second implies a first. The similar and very significant educational responsibility they both have is to help the dual language learner integrate not simply two languages but two cultures and ways of living into one unique wholistic identity (Valdéz, 1986). It is important then to stress the obvious overlap in definitions of the two in order that other extraneous definitions which continue to keep the two programs separated from each other be eliminated.

Both teachers must begin to internalize a stronger conception of BE and ESL as: a) two relatively independent but mostly interdependent language teaching systems; b) facilitation of two interpersonal processes in one larger intrapersonal one; c) support for two socialization paths toward a wider biethnic and bicultural one; d) instruction in two means of communication and cognition; e) help developing two temporal, spatial and propositional symbolic and representational systems; f) appreciation of two systems of ideas, attitudes, values and practices; g) help integrating two socially complementary networks of language experiences; h) help developing awareness of two objects of analysis or metalinguistic competence; i) appreciation of two shared meanings, scripts and ways of organizing knowledge; j) help constructing two dynamic forms of the interaction between thought, language, and perception; and lastly k) help developing two different but equally valued ways of using language for community and cognition purposes (Spradley, 1972; Piatt, 1990).

Dual Language Wholism

Among the other important contributions of whole language theory must be the emancipation of the study of language from its monolingual form only. It is through whole language theory, research, and analysis that BE and ESL theory will find their strongest basis for mutual cooperation.

Both BE and ESL teachers must see the goal of dual language acquisition process not as two monolinguals but as one integrative bilingual one with unique interlanguage capacities such as mixing, translating, transferring, borrowing, switching, and nativizing / de-nativizing first and second language forms.

Grosjean (1985) has written an excellent statement which helps us view the bilingual not as two monolinguals in one person, but as a unique configuration of a perfectly competent speaker-hearer and reader-writer in his/her own right. A unique and specific configuration as a result of a unique intercultural experience.

Everything that wholism means in one language is a fortiori (with greater reason, or all the more so) in dual or multilingual situations. Every aspect of human development is a wholistic process and a relatively wholistic end-state. And so it is also with the development of bilinguality.

Human language has two wholistic functions: a) external adaptation or communication, and b) internal organization or cognition. The characteristics of one are the characteristics of the other. In bilinguality there is yet a third equilibration or configuration: the communication and cognition of combined languages for a third type of adaptation and organization.

The study of the unique behavior/characteristics of bilinguality is still in its infancy, but we do know that between one language and the other there are for the bilingual language user a whole range of intermediary language forms which are also quite wholistic and purposeful to the communicative and cognitive functioning of the individual (Hamers & Blanc, 1990).

What makes the bilingual unique is not some sort of personality split, but the integrated behavior patterns from two cultures which he/she can apply successfully to appropriate settings. The bilingual person develops specific psycholinguistic mechanisms in which both languages are interrelated to different degrees. The interdependence hypotheses lends support to the wholism of these psycholinguistic processes. The bilingual person develops these psycholinguistic mechanisms which enable him/her to function alternatively in one or the other languages/cultures or in a mixed mode. The bilingual person has developed a unique knowledge of the relations between the two codes, which no monolingual ever attains (Hamers & Blanc, 1990).

Bilinguality is itself a unifying and integrating process attempting completeness within and across two specifically distinct linguistic codes and modes of representation. Bilinguality processes aim at remaining integral, complete, and meaningful given two symbol systems which are not equivalent in many linguistic ways.

In summary again, the task of the developing bilingual person is to acquire the wholism of communication in each language and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two objects of analysis and then these combined; to

acquire the wholism of two symbol systems and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two communities and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of temporal, spatial and propositional forms and representations and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two systems of practices, ideas, attitudes and values and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two social cognition systems and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two socially interactive contexts and these combined; to acquire the wholism of two non-linguistic or paralinguistic systems and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two socialization or enculturation processes and then these combined; to acquire two dynamic forms of the interactions of language and thought and perception and these combined; to acquire the wholism of two sets of scripts and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two language experiences and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two social networks and then these combined; to acquire the wholism of two differentially valued and often socially conflicting languages and then combine these; to reconcile the wholism of two interpersonal processes into one intrapersonal one.

Only when both types of teachers come to see the unity and wholism in dual language acquisition will their curricular programs complement and enrich each other and therefore be of greater use to the dual language learner.

Questions and Implications

The continued study of the overlap between BE and ESL theory and research is imperative if greater coordination and collaboration between these two programs is their goal. BE and ESL teachers must come to view each other's objectives as dealing with the same phenomenon. BE and ESL teachers should ask and research the same issues and questions which have implications for both types of instruction.

Do they both recognize and appreciate this phenomenon as a dual acquisition process? If so, do they recognize the many factors (49 according to Schumann, 1978) affecting dual language acquisition such as social, affective, personality, cognitive, biological, and instructional? Do they appreciate the wide variations in linguistic capacity among learners for dual phonemic encoding, dual grammatical sensitivity, dual memory, etc.?

Do they understand the complexity of such a process? Can they recognize some universals across the languages as well as the most distinct features? What is their knowledge of first language acquisition process contrasted/compared with second language acquisition processes? What stages can be identified in this special linguistic developmental path? Is this dual language acquisition process viewed as two separate conflicting paths and competing processes? Do they understand the uniqueness and specificity of dual language learning behavior? What appreciation do both BE and ESL teachers have of the concept of "interlanguage" or "learner language variety"? What is their response to code-switching and mixing, or other cross-linguistic transfers or influences between the two languages? Is the "strange" language or "errors" these learners make viewed as capricious and as weak linguistic intelligence, or as arising from bilinguistic developmental and transfer strategies available to them as a complex of different types of rules? What knowledge do teachers in both programs have

of contrastive analysis, errors/miscue analysis, discourse analysis, etc., in order to better appreciate this linguistic behavior as systematic but creative and variable as all other linguistic behavior is also?

Do both teachers appreciate the special identity development these students will have to construct from two cultures? Do both teachers understand the social-psychological distance operating within each student as they approach the learning of two languages and ways of living? Do they fully understand the learner's predispositions to learning a second language and the problem of maintaining or losing their first language and culture?

How does their knowledge of the dual language learner and the dual acquisition process affect their language instruction and pedagogy? Do both teachers respond in creative but fairly consistent ways to these learners? Will the activities of the BE teacher complement and support those of the ESL teacher and vice versa? Are they both clear on what types of competencies and accomplishments they are moving toward for the learners: strategic competencies, discourse competency, communicative competence, linguistic competence, socio-linguistic competence (including the code mixed/switched variety) etc.? To what end-state or proficiency level are each of the teachers striving for the languages in question? What will the ultimate purpose and role of each language be? In short, are they both supporting the process of becoming bilingual? Do they have knowledge and faith that bilingualism is a capacity available to all humans?

Lastly, do they recognize how much and which part of this process is their responsibility and how much and which part of the process belongs to the learner and to other factors? Do they recognize the delicate balance of factors which support the natural language acquisition process for two languages?

Conclusions

As both language programs continue to more clearly define their specific philosophies, purposes and approaches, such definitions are beginning to overlap in imperative and important ways. While today BE and ESL teachers may have great difficulty getting together to coordinate their work, many have and more are moving in this direction. Both programs to differing degrees are beginning to appreciate and understand more fully the complexity of dual language acquisition and learning and therefore of dual language teaching and instruction. First and second whole language theory and research is moving in the direction of integrating the two (Lessow-Hurley, 1990).

BE and ESL's main point of intersection lies within the student whose linguistic context and circumstances will have required him/her to develop both English and another language. This type of student may very well be the majority of students in the near future. English as a first language or English as a second language will come to have its counterpart: non-English language as a first language or a second language. The dual language learning or dual language acquisition or development process of these students must be better understood by both BE and ESL teachers. Socio-psycholinguistic theories of bilinguistic development are quite new but they have already begun to shed some light on the psychological processes which dual language learners experience.

These learners face a formidable yet not impossible task and process which will undergo developmental changes toward a more/less ideal end-state in each language (the continued growth which depends upon a supportive developmental context).

Both programs are beginning to understand their mutual goal and role more fully. Bilingual Education and ESL by another name are both dual language instruction programs. Although their histories are somewhat different today they both aim at similar linguistic and educational goals: the bilinguistic/bicultural development of both language minority and language majority students. Both have begun to see biculturalism as a pre-requisite for the multicultural goals many educators aim for, and both see multiculturalism as a way of life global society may have to adopt to a large extent within and across nations.

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